

Act 71 - Promoting Osteoporosis Awareness

To help get the word out about osteoporosis and what people can do to prevent it, the General Assembly in 1998 approved legislation sponsored by Montgomery County lawmaker Rep. Lita Cohen that establishes an Osteoporosis Prevention and Education Program in the state Department of Health.

The program created by Act 71 will help raise public awareness of the disease and educate consumers, health care professionals, teachers and human services providers about the causes and risk factors of osteoporosis, as well as ways to detect, prevent and treat it.

For more information about osteoporosis, talk to your doctor or other health care professional or contact:

Pennsylvania Department of Health
P.O. Box 90
Health and Welfare Building
Harrisburg, PA 17108
Call toll-free: 1-800-692-7254

On the World Wide Web

- National Osteoporosis Foundation - www.nof.org
- Doctors' Guide to Osteoporosis Information and Resources - www.pslgroup.com/OSTEOPOROSIS.HTM
- Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases National Resource Center - www.osteoporosis.org/
- Foundation for Osteoporosis Research and Education - www.fore.org/

Osteoporosis Is Preventable!

But You Need to Start When You're Young

You can help prevent osteoporosis if you build strong bones before the age of 25. A good prevention lifestyle includes:

1. Eating a balanced diet rich in calcium
2. Exercising regularly
3. Not smoking
4. Limiting your intake of alcohol.



Mark M. Gillen

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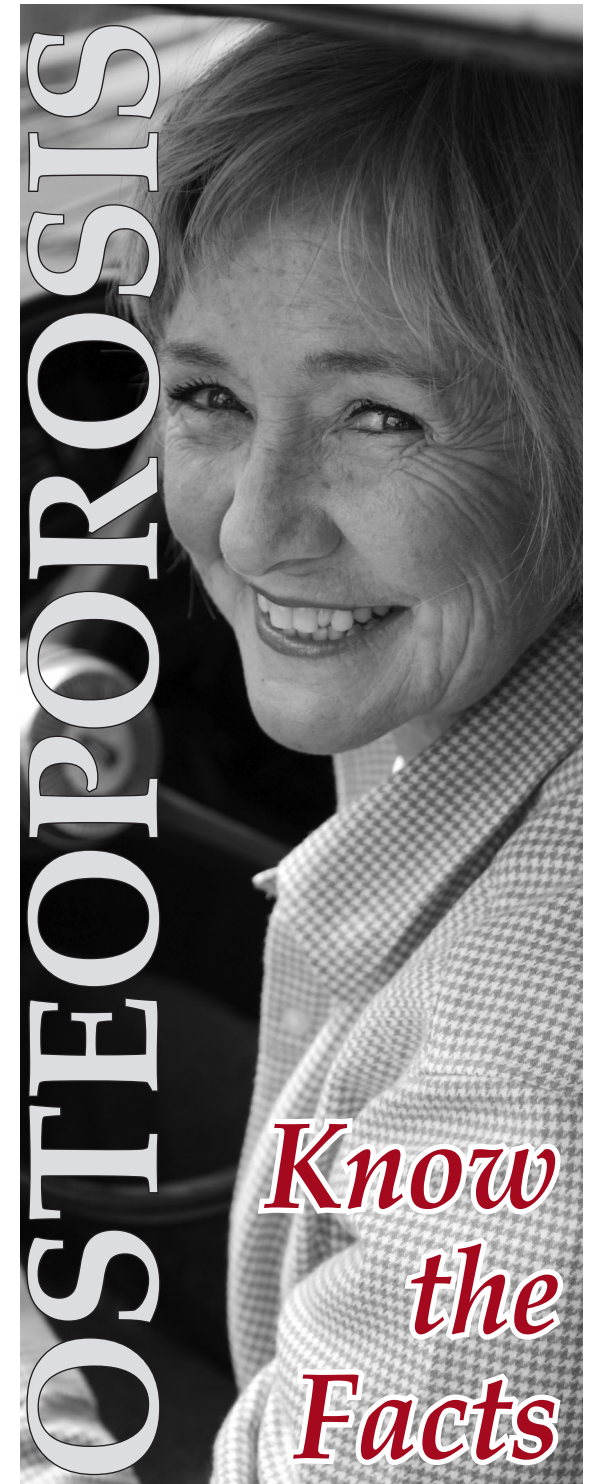
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HOW TO IDENTIFY RISK FACTORS... *and prevent loss of bone mass.*

What Is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis, or “porous bone,” is the loss of mass in a person’s bones. This can make bones weaker and more prone to fracturing. Osteoporosis can strike at any age, but bone loss is most significant during the first five years after menopause, when women lose about one-third of the total bone mass they will lose in their lifetime.

What Causes It?

While there are many factors affecting bone density, the following could contribute to the development of osteoporosis: a drop in estrogen levels due to menopause, aging, genetics and possibly low intake of calcium in the diet and an inactive lifestyle.

How Many People Are Affected?

In Pennsylvania, it is estimated that the disease affects approximately 418,000 women and 105,000 men over the age of 50. Almost one million more people may have low bone mass, placing

them at increased risk for developing the disease. Nationwide, an estimated 28 million Americans are affected, 80 percent of them women.

What Are The Symptoms?

Osteoporosis has no symptoms. Many people find out they have the disease when they fall and fracture a bone. If you’re past menopause, discuss bone health with your family physician to determine your risk for osteoporosis. Once bone is lost, treatments can strengthen the remaining bone but cannot completely replace what was lost.

Can Osteoporosis Be Prevented or Treated ?

Yes it can. As treatment to help prevent osteoporosis, your physician may recommend exercise, healthy diet and a daily intake of calcium, as well as the various hormonal and nonhormonal treatments that are available. Be sure to discuss all options with your doctor. Young people can reduce their risk to develop the disease later in life by adopting a healthy lifestyle that builds strong bones.

Calcium Supplements – Will They Help?

We all need calcium in our diets—it’s an important mineral that affects several bodily functions. Doctors recommend that adult women consume 1,200 milligrams of calcium per day and increase that to 1,500 milligrams after menopause. But if you’re getting enough calcium in a balanced diet, you don’t necessarily need a supplement. Talk to your doctor, especially if you are currently on medication or have a history of kidney stones.

Calcium Sources in the Diet - Milk and dairy products, sardines and salmon (with bones), mustard and turnip greens, calcium-set tofu, calcium-fortified fruit drinks, calcium-fortified orange juice, and calcium-fortified soy milk.

Facts About Osteoporosis:

- In the first five years after menopause, women can lose up to 15 percent of their bone mass
- The loss of bone mass makes bones weak and more prone to break
- A majority of the 28 million Americans with osteoporosis don’t know they have it
- Each year, women suffer 1.3 million osteoporotic fractures, including 250,000 hip fractures
- Osteoporosis costs the nation \$10 billion annually, more than congestive heart failure or asthma

Risk Factors for Osteoporosis

Check the following list to see if you may be at risk of developing osteoporosis. Having several risk factors doesn’t necessarily mean you will develop the condition, just that your chances may be increased. If you have any questions or concerns, talk to your physician.

- Gender - women are four times more likely than men to develop osteoporosis
- Early menopause
- Total hysterectomy before age 45
- Family history of osteoporosis
- Low bone mass, or thin, small build
- Caucasian or Asian race
- History of nontraumatic fracture
- Chronic use of anti-inflammatory steroids
- Excessive doses of thyroid medications
- Smoking, inactive lifestyle or excessive use of alcohol